

A CHALLENGE TO EVERY INDEPENDENT BAPTIST

THE PATH FROM INDEPENDENT BAPTIST TO THE SHACK, ROME, AND BEYOND

June 23, 2011 (David Cloud, Fundamental Baptist Information Service, P.O. Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 48061, 866-295-4143, fbns@wayoflife.org; for instructions about subscribing and unsubscribing or changing addresses, see the information paragraph at the end of the article) -

The following is an abbreviated edition of a book-length report that is available as a free eBook download from the Way of Life web site. In the book we give much more information and documentation.

The following is available at the following link. Also available here is a free download of the June 2011 issue of *O Timothy* magazine, which contains a graphic edition of this report.

<http://www.wayoflife.org/thepath/index.html>

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The path from Independent Baptist to the broader evangelical church is clearly marked, and it typically leads through the Southern Baptist Convention. There we encounter treacherous waters where ancient heresies and end-times fables abound.

I don't know of any Independent Baptist preachers (yet) who believe in the non-judgmental *Shack* god/goddess or salvation apart from faith in Christ or Christian homosexuality or the downgrade of hell or the partial inspiration of Scripture or Robert Schuller's self-esteemism or who love the Roman Catholic mass or promote contemplative mysticism or deny the substitutionary atonement of Christ or promote New Age practitioners.

But many evangelicals and Southern Baptists are guilty of these things.

When the walls of separation are torn down or become "soft," Independent Baptists can drift into these treacherous waters and become shipwreck. In fact, they don't even have to drift out of the Independent Baptist movement today, because the treacherous waters are back flowing into the IB movement through the gaps in separation and bringing the spiritual dangers with them.

Some claim that the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) is “conservative” and theologically safe today and that the battle against liberalism has been won. There is a move by some fundamentalists to join hands with “conservative evangelicals.”

When Jerry Falwell led Thomas Road Baptist Church into the Southern Baptist Convention in 1996, he said, “... the national and Virginia Bible-believing conservatives ... have rescued the Southern Baptist Convention from theological liberalism” (Baptist Press, October 24, 1996).

When Highland Park Baptist Church of Chattanooga, Tennessee, went back into the Convention in 2008, a little over 50 years after leaving, Nat Phillips said that “he did not believe the separation from the SBC would even have happened--were it today [because] the SBC has turned its direction back toward its conservative theological roots” (James Wigton, *Lee Roberson--Always about His Father's Business*, p. 233).

These are misguided, ill-informed statements. Shockingly so.

In reality, the SBC is more filled with heresy today than it was in the 1960s and 1970s when John R. Rice and others were warning about its liberalism and so many churches left it.

In September 1989 Jerry Huffman, editor of the *Calvary Contender*, rightly said, “The SBC IS AN UNEQUALLY-YOKED MIXED MULTITUDE.” That was after the “conservative renaissance.”

Consider the following testimony from a pastor who left the SBC in 1996:

“During my upbringing the compromise in the SBC began to creep in. It was subtle and almost imperceptible. The changes were hardly noticed. Yet, THE WAVES OF CONTINUED COMPROMISE CARRIED THE SBC INTO DEEP AND TREACHEROUS WATERS, FROM WHICH THEY NEVER RETURNED. It is sad to see many of the IB churches following the same course” (Marty Wynn, Lighthouse Baptist Church, Columbus, Georgia, e-mail to D. Cloud, May 21, 2011).

TREACHEROUS WATERS is a perfect description of evangelicalism in general and of the Southern Baptist Convention in particular. These are permeated with ancient and end-times heresies (2 Timothy 3:13) and fables (2 Timothy 4:4).

I almost entitled this report “The Treacherous waters of the Southern Baptist Convention,” but I decided against it, because the report is not for Southern Baptists or evangelicalism at large. I don’t think there is any hope for them. They mock and malign and ignore the warners. They hide behind the impressive size of their denominations and movements and the brilliance of their scholars and refuse to heed godly reproof. They are like the rich man whose wealth is his strong city (Proverbs 18:11). Like the Laodicean Church, they are “rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing,” so what possible need would they have of correction? So there is no hope.

No, this report is for the Bible-believing fundamentalist churches that still have any sort of spiritual/doctrinal backbone but are in danger of the treacherous waters through an ineffective separatism. It is for Bible-believing churches that still have the wisdom to listen to Bible-based, well-documented warnings.

My challenge to these churches is this: The only way to be protected is to keep your boat *entirely* out of these waters. Education, reproof, and separation are the divinely-ordained means of spiritual protection.

My warning to these churches is this: Every fundamentalist and Independent Baptist church that does not take Biblical separation *seriously* today and does not make the effort to practice *EFFECTIVE* separation will be well down the emerging evangelical path within 15 years. And if the church itself is not emerging by then, many of the current and future members will be.

Asa and Jehoshaphat

The SBC is a mixed multitude, and the best men in the Convention today, the “conservative evangelicals,” are like Asa and Jehoshaphat. They are good men as far as it goes, sound in their faith in the true God as known in Jesus Christ. They do not worship idols. But they are *not* known for tearing down idols and they don’t want to be known for tearing down idols. And even when they do tear down *some* idols, they leave the high places intact so that idolatry/heresy continues to increase and spread.

Some of the conservatives will lift a voice against a few errors, usually in a fairly vague manner, but large numbers of them are like Billy Graham and his brother-in-law Leighton Ford, who are universally acclaimed within the SBC and evangelicalism in general.

Graham warned about “false prophets” in generalities, but when asked by the *United Church Observer* of Canada whether he considered Paul Tillich a false prophet, Graham replied: “I have made it a practice not to pass judgment on other clergymen” (*United Church Observer*, July 1, 1966).

And when I interviewed Leighton Ford at the National Pastors Conference in San Diego in 2009 and asked him whether he is satisfied with where the evangelical movement has come, he replied, “I will not criticize anyone!” I had reminded him that there are evangelicals at that very meeting who deny the substitutionary atonement, deny the infallible inspiration of Scripture, write novels depicting God as a woman, etc., and that was his rather flippant but very forceful reply to this important question.

If you look only at them (the “conservatives”) things seem fairly right, but if you look farther afield within their own associations and movement you see confusion and error abounding, while they stand in the midst of it all wearing the beguiling smile of spiritual pacifism and maligning any prophet who seeks to correct them.

Like Jehoshaphat, they affiliate with the idolaters and the enemies of God instead of plainly reproving and separating from them.

Contrast Hezekiah, who “removed the high places, and brake the images, and cut down the groves, and brake in pieces the brasen serpent that Moses had made: for unto those days the children of Israel did burn incense to it: and he called it Nehushtan” (2 Kings 18:4).

And contrast Josiah, who went through the entire land himself and oversaw the destruction of the idols. “And he brake in pieces the images, and cut down the groves, and filled their places with the bones of men” (2 Kings 23:14).

But the last time the Southern Baptist Convention had a real rip-roaring idol-hater was probably in the days of J. Frank Norris, and they kicked him out as a dangerous extremist. Ever since, the real prophets and the thorough-going idol haters have found a home in the Independent Baptist movement (and such men have been few and far between even among IBaptists).

The “conservatives” we find today within the SBC in particular and evangelicalism at large are the Asas and the Jehoshaphats.

“And also Maachah his mother, even her he [ASA] removed from being queen, because she had made an idol in a grove; and Asa destroyed her idol, and burnt it by the brook Kidron. BUT THE HIGH PLACES WERE NOT REMOVED: nevertheless Asa's heart was perfect with the LORD all his days” (1 Kings 15:13-14).

“And Jehu the son of Hanani the seer went out to meet him, and said to king Jehoshaphat, SHOULDEST THOU HELP THE UNGODLY, AND LOVE THEM THAT HATE THE LORD? therefore is wrath upon thee from before the LORD. Nevertheless there are good things found in thee, in that thou hast taken away the groves out of the land, and hast prepared thine heart to seek God” (2 Chronicles 19:2-3).

Jehoshaphat tore down some idols, but he associated with idolaters and for that he was judged by God and forcefully reproved by the prophet. He said that he hated idols, but he yoked together with idolaters; he said that he loved God but he also loved God's enemies. It was very confusing. He was “Mr. Facing Two Ways.”

It appears from 2 Chronicles 19:2-3 that God requires so-called “secondary separation” in no uncertain terms!

This is because the Asa-Jehoshaphat-type of compromise is not a light matter. The compromise with idols, the refusal to deal with them aggressively, the refusal to tear them down and to destroy the high places where they are worshipped and where they proliferate, eventually led to the quenching of Israel's light and divine judgment on the nation.

The leaven of idolatry spread even during the reigns of the good kings because the idols and high places were not decidedly cut off.

And “all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come” (1 Corinthians 10:11).

God’s people, wake up!!!!!!!!!!

Shortsighted men see only the present blessings and focus only on the good. They look at Asa- and Jehoshaphat-type preachers and see no big problem, surely nothing to get upset about. Shortsighted men regard the reproving prophets to be more of a problem than compromising preachers.

But two times the book of Proverbs repeats the truth that “a prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself: but the simple pass on, and are punished” (Proverbs 22:3; 27:12). Two times means emphasis. Two times means “listen up!”

Shortsighted men don’t understand that if sin and error are not dealt with plainly, if they aren’t nipped in the bud, they eventually corrupt everything and ruin all of the good and result in destruction.

Two times the New Testament repeats the truth that “a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.” It is stated in relation to sin and again in relation to error (1 Corinthians 5:8; Galatians 5:9).

“A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.” What a profound truth. If leaven is not removed, entirely removed, cut out, cut off, it continues to spread. Even if a little bit of it is left, it spreads and it eventually leavens the whole lump.

Leaven is not stopped by preachers who focus on preaching positive truth and who avoid controversy and refuse to deal with sin and error and idols plainly. It is not stopped by dealing with only some idols. It matters not how much those preachers might love God and His Word in their own lives and how much positive truth they preach or how effectively they preach it or how zealously they deal with *some* of the idols. You can cut out 50%, 75%, even 95% of leaven, and it will still continue to spread. All the devil must do is bide his time.

Conservative Evangelicals Are Bridges to Every Sort of Heresy

Conservative evangelicals like Ed Stetzer and John Piper, are enablers of heresies by their refusal to deal with error plainly enough and to cut off association with it decidedly, and they therefore allow and even facilitate its spread.

For example, Stetzer, head of the SBC’s LifeWay research department, holds to the “in non-essentials liberty” philosophy, despises separatism, and associates with pretty much anybody and

everybody. He is a bridge to the “broader church” that is filled to the brim today with ancient and end-times heresies (such as baptismal regeneration, popery, Mariolatry, sacramentalism, anti-Trinitarianism, universalism, Catholic mysticism, kingdom now reconstructionism, Charismaticism, theistic evolution, fallible inspiration of Scripture, panentheism, the non-judgmental “Shack” god, and Christian homosexuality).

As far as I know, Stetzer, as a “conservative evangelical,” doesn’t hold to these heresies, but he is a bridge to the broader “evangelical church” where an individual can easily be influenced by any and all of these. He is a path to the treacherous waters.

Most of these heresies are represented by the authors featured in any LifeWay Bookstore and certainly by those with whom those authors are directly associated.

Consider some of Stetzer’s associations. He is closely affiliated with Mark Driscoll, who is “culturally liberal” (e.g., ushering in the New Year through champaign dance parties), hates the doctrine of the Rapture, and promotes Catholic contemplative mysticism, among other things. Stetzer is affiliated with fellow Southern Baptist Rick Warren, who in turn is closely affiliated with New Agers and universalists (e.g., Tony Blair, Mehmet Oz, Daniel Amen, Mark Hyman, Leonard Sweet) and promotes Catholic contemplative mysticism, among many other things. Stetzer is non-critically affiliated with the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, which in turn is affiliated with the papacy and has turned thousands of “converts” over to the Catholic Church. Stetzer is also affiliated with the most liberal of emergents, who deny the infallible inspiration of Scripture, the substitutionary atonement, a literal hell, and many other fundamentals of the faith. Though Stetzer criticizes their heresies, he does so in gentle, intellectual, dialoguing terms and refuses to disassociate from them. He won’t stand up on his hind legs and reprove them in no uncertain terms for the rank and wretched heretics they are! For example, Stetzer participates in Shapevine, an emerging church blog that features liberal emergents such as Brian McLaren, Tony Jones, Sally Morgenthaler, Alan Hirsch, and Leonard Sweet. Shapevine is called “a global community of collaborators.” “Conservative Southern Baptists” like Stetzer are right in the middle of this unscriptural collaboration (Romans 16:17; 2 Corinthians 6:14-18; 2 Timothy 3:5). (See our book *What Is the Emerging Church?* for documentation of the dangerous heresies of the aforementioned emergent leaders.)

Consider John Piper. He is another bridge to the heresies in the “broader evangelical church.” In April 2011, Piper conducted a Desiring God conference at Rick Warren’s Saddleback Church, and in June he preached at the annual Southern Baptist pastors conference, again joining hands with Rick Warren.

When you get into Rick Warren’s sphere, you are within reach of all sorts of heresies and fables. These are treacherous waters, indeed. Warren preaches the heretical “judge not” philosophy; turns the church into a rock & roll entertainment center complete with pelvic thrusts; says God won’t ask about your doctrinal views; continually and approvingly quotes from heretics in his writings and preaching (such as Roman Catholic universalists Mother Teresa, Henri Nouwen,

and Thomas Merton); promotes Catholic contemplative mysticism; likens Christian fundamentalists to Islamic terrorists; calls for unity between Baptists, Roman Catholics, Pentecostals, Anglicans, etc.; promotes the exceedingly liberal Baptist World Alliance; yokes together with New Age practitioners; says that believers should work with unbelievers and pagan religionists to build the kingdom of God; and presents Roman Catholic one-worlder Tony Blair with a peace prize (March 2011). For documentation see <http://www.wayoflife.org/database/warrenheader.html>

In spite of the danger represented by John Piper's association with these treacherous waters, his popularity is growing among Independent Baptists. In a 2005 survey of roughly 1,100 "young fundamentalists," almost 50% agreed with the statement, "John Piper's ministry has been a help to me." Kevin Bauder of Central Baptist Seminary has recently used his blog to praise "conservative evangelicals" such as Piper. Northland University has also been "resonating" with Piper and other "conservative evangelicals."

Soft Separatism Is a Path to the Bridge Builders and Beyond to the Treacherous Waters

Conservative Southern Baptists and conservative evangelicals don't believe in separation. In fact, they often renounce it. Thus they and their ministries are bridges to all of the heresies and fables that populate the Convention today.

Independent Baptists, on the other hand, do profess to believe in separation, but all too often it is a soft, ineffectual type. It is ineffectual to protect God's people in IBaptist churches from the treacherous waters in the SBC and the broader evangelical movements.

"Soft separatist" IBaptist preachers such as the extremely influential Lee Roberson, of recent memory, and those today who are leading large segments of the IBaptist movement in the same soft direction, allow bridges to be built between IBaptists and the evangelical/Southern Baptist world. This is because they have a "keep it positive" philosophy whereby they don't typically reprove error plainly or name the names of compromisers or even heretics. They don't expose the conservative evangelical bridge builders, and they don't reprove and disassociate from IBaptist preachers who are affiliating with the Southern Baptist Convention and evangelicalism at large.

And even when they do disassociate to some extent, they do it "quietly" and no one knows what is happening and the leaven of compromise is not therefore stopped.

Lee Roberson, pastor of Highland Park Baptist Church for 40 years and founder of Tennessee Temple University, was the king of "soft separatism" in the IBaptist movement. Everything was kept on a positive, upbeat note. Dr. Roberson's biographer observes:

"Roberson developed a focus that controlled his ministry. 'I kept my mind and ministry settled -- winning people to Christ, getting people to grow in grace,' he said. 'Stay out of controversy in the pulpit--stay out of it and stay on the main line. I think that helped me a lot. I tried to avoid

personalities and stay on the main line: preaching the gospel, emphasis on winning people to Christ, emphasis on developing the spiritual life, dying to self, the fullness of the Spirit, the second coming--kept on the positive side, kept negatives away from the people.' ... Negativism and criticism simply were not a part of Lee Roberson's life" (Wigton, pp. 78, 243).

Typically, warnings were given only in generalities. Leading compromisers such as Jerry Falwell or James Dobson or Bill Bright or Charles Swindoll or even Billy Graham were not identified by name from the pulpit and their error was not detailed and highlighted so that the people could get a proper grasp of the danger they represented.

"Later when Billy Graham's ecumenical cooperation became a controversial issue among fundamentalists, Lee Roberson quietly backed out of such cooperation. 'Dr. Roberson NEVER SAID A CRITICAL WORD ABOUT IT,' said Faulkner. 'If he had anything to say, it was always positive. That was his position on all issues. He just never had a critical word about anything. ... He won't talk about the brethren. You never heard him in the pulpit here call anyone names.' ... Ed Johnson, always loyal to Dr. Roberson said, 'He avoided controversy. We were not exposed to the rise of the neo-evangelicalism in my days at Temple. Doc stayed away from that controversy.' ...

"When it became common for some independent Baptists to criticize independent Baptist leaders such as Jerry Falwell or evangelist Tim Lee for preaching for Southern Baptists or other non-independent Baptist ministries, Roberson never wavered in his support of such men. He felt that men like Falwell and Lee had a heart for the Lord and for souls, and that was all that mattered to him" (Wigton, pp. 240, 241).

It has been said that no position can be maintained without a campaign, and I am convinced that lack of campaigning is one of the chief reasons why Highland Park is a rock & roll Southern Baptist institution today.

In the 1970s and 1980s, the church claimed to be fundamentalist and professed *not* to be New Evangelical, but there was no campaigning *for* separatism and *against* New Evangelicalism.

They were Independent Baptist and not Southern Baptist, but there was no real campaigning *against* the Southern Baptist Convention and little or no clear exposure of the compromise there, and the bridges to the Convention were not broken down.

As a student at Temple in the 1970s, I learned many good things and I thank the Lord for it, but the problem resided more in what I *didn't* learn. This is the heart of New Evangelical error. It is not the heresy that is taught that is the problem; it is the truth that is neglected. It is not a complete lack of Biblical stance; it is the softness of that stance.

It was not uncommon for pot shots to be taken against real separatists and those men who did issue plain warnings. Of course, they didn't name the names of these men, but everyone knew who they were talking about and everyone got the message.

Positivism is death in the pot of any church or school that wants to maintain a biblical position, because the Bible is most assuredly filled up with a lot of very "negative" stuff, and the plainest

warning against sin, error, and compromise is a major characteristic of the New Testament writings.

Paul often named names, and he said, “Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample” (Philippians 3:17). In the Pastoral Epistles he named the names of false teachers and compromisers at many times -- Hymenaeus and Alexander, Phygellus and Hermogenes, Hymenaeus and Philetus, Alexander the Coppersmith, Demas. These epistles were used among the churches to train preachers in that day. His “criticism” of these men was a matter of public record, which is how it must be. How is it reasonable to allow false teachers and compromisers to influence people without PUBLICLY reproofing them? Private reproof doesn’t help those being influenced by them.

Because of Dr. Roberson’s soft separation, bridges were maintained with the Southern Baptist Convention and the broader evangelical world.

“Roberson never fought against Southern Baptists, nor did he openly criticize them” (Wigton, *Lee Roberson*, pp. 227, 228, 232, 242).

The soft stance on separatism and the wrong associations and lack of clear teaching and warning about error were the reason why the church’s deacons were not prepared to choose a pastor to replace Dr. Roberson. They were not properly educated about New Evangelicalism and many other important issues pertaining to the isms and schisms of our day, and the association with New Evangelicals and Southern Baptists was already established. So it is no surprise that the deacons chose a soft fundamentalist followed by an out-and-out New Evangelical to replace Dr. Roberson.

The fruit of soft separation is now evident for all to see.

The fact that the church Dr. Roberson pastored for 40 years is Southern Baptist today and the fact that his funeral was preached by a man who led his college into the Southern Baptist Convention (Paul Dixon, president of Cedarville University) and the fact that his authorized biography was written by a Southern Baptist pastor is the fruit of his soft separatism and his very weak stance toward the great spiritual/doctrinal/moral compromise within the Convention in particular and evangelicalism in general.

Today, Highland Park Baptist Church is a broadminded rock & roll fest. They bring in rockers like Toddiefunk and the Electric Church, whose album *Ready or Not* featured “Holy Ghost Thang,” “Dance Floor,” “Naked,” and “Crazay.”

In 2006, Tennessee Temple invited emerging church leader Dallas Willard for the Spring Lecture Series. As we will see in this report, Willard believes that “it is possible for someone who does not know Jesus to be saved” (“Apologetics in Action,” *Cutting Edge* magazine, Winter 2001). He rejects the infallible inspiration of Scripture, saying, “Jesus and his words have never belonged to

the categories of dogma or law, and to read them as if they did is simply to miss the point” (*The Divine Conspiracy*, p. xiii). He is confused about salvation itself, claiming that it is a process. He calls the traditional doctrine of substitutionary blood atonement “a theory.” In *The Spirit of the Disciplines*, which promotes Roman Catholic-style contemplative mysticism, Willard includes the endorsement of Sue Monk Kidd, a New Age “goddess.” He promotes the Catholic-Buddhist Thomas Merton and an assortment of Catholic mystic saints and says that God is pleased with theologians on both the left and the right.

Highland Park Baptist Church and Tennessee Temple University are in treacherous waters for sure, and the reason is that the separation that was practiced by the former leader was far too soft.

Dr. Roberson has had a massive influence in the Independent Baptist movement and many Independent Baptist preachers are following in his footsteps and committed to his principles. They are concerned more about avoiding “fragmentation” and building unity among IBaptists than standing against error. They aren’t careful enough about their associations. They say they are opposed to the Southern Baptist Convention, but they make no serious effort to expose the Convention’s errors and they do not effectively reprove and disassociate from preacher friends who are building unwise bridges to the Convention. They speak highly of men like Lee Roberson and Jerry Falwell who built bridges to the Convention that many have traveled; they mention such men in their lists of past heroes, and *any* criticism of such men is extremely low-key and vague. More often the criticism is non-existent.

Instead of approving and distributing a well-documented report like this (“The Path from Independent Baptist to The Shack, Rome, and Beyond”), so that Independent Baptists will be properly informed, they malign the author for being “divisive.” They shoot the messenger.

They despise “warning” ministries (it would be more appropriate to call them “protection” ministries) like the former *Calvary Contender* or *O Timothy* magazine or *Foundation* magazine or the *Fundamentalist Digest*. They don’t promote these important “protection” tools to their people and students, and as a result there is a lack of proper education and spiritual discernment.

And because they have the philosophy that protection ministries are wrong-headed and because they malign them, the preachers they train don’t develop any type of warning ministries. The result is widespread ignorance of issues of which they need to be highly educated and about which their people need to be informed.

Soft separatists among Independent Baptists aren’t limited to those following the Lee Roberson model.

Central Baptist Seminary of Minnesota, Calvary Baptist Seminary of Lansdale, Pennsylvania, and Northland International University (formerly Northland Baptist Bible College) have all recently praised “evangelical conservatives” and “evangelical Southern Baptists.” These institutions are thereby building bridges to the broader evangelical world.

Northland invited Bruce Ware, Southern Baptist Seminary professor, to conduct a seminar for pastors in 2010.

Calvary Baptist Seminary invited Southern Baptist pastor Mark Dever as a speaker at their National Leadership Conference. In a mailing to its alumni announcing its February 2011 Conference, the seminary's leadership stated: "We should grant each other the freedom to hold differing viewpoints and to refrain from caustic letter-writing campaigns to or about those with whom one might differ. ... in our zeal to earnestly contend for the faith, fundamentalism became more concerned about minor issues and less concerned about what the Bible clearly presents as the majors" (Aug. 25, 2010). The "minor issues" are said to be such things as which English translation to use, acceptable dress standards, music styles, election, and baptism.

Kevin Bauder of Central Baptist Seminary uses his blog to praise "conservative evangelicals" such as Southern Baptist Seminary head Al Mohler, John Piper, D.A. Carson, and R. C. Sproul.

Contemporary Worship Music Is another Path to the Broader Church

Another path from Independent Baptists to the treacherous waters of the "broader evangelical church" is contemporary worship music.

Many Independent Baptist churches are "adapting" contemporary worship music by toning down the rhythm (trying to take the rock out of Christian rock), but this is very dangerous.

The CCM movers and shakers know that their music is transformative. In an interview with *Christianity Today*, Don Moen of Integrity Music said:

"I've discovered that worship [music] is transdenominational, transcultural. IT BRIDGES ANY DENOMINATION. Twenty years ago there were many huge divisions between denominations. Today I think the walls are coming down. In any concert that I do, I will have 30-50 different churches represented."

In fact, they are actively targeting "old-fashioned" churches to move them into the "broader church."

There are TRANSITION SONGS and BRIDGE SONGS designed to move traditional churches along the contemporary path toward Christian rock. From the perspective of the CCM artists involved in this, they aren't doing anything sinister. They are simply and sincerely trying to "feed" the "broader church." But from a fundamentalist Bible-believing position, the effect is to draw "old-fashioned" Bible churches into the contemporary orb, and that is most sinister.

Bridge songs include "How Deep the Father's Love for Us" by Stuart Townend and "In Christ Alone" by Townend and Keith Getty.

These songs are doctrinally sound and hymn-like (soft rock ballad style as opposed to out-and-out rock & roll), so they are considered “safe” by traditional churches.

But by using this music a church is brought into association with the contemporary world that Townsend represents and that brings Independent Baptist church members into treacherous waters.

Townend is an out-and-out Christian rocker. He is charismatic in theology and radically ecumenical in philosophy, supporting the Alpha program which bridges charismatic, Protestant, and Roman Catholic churches. He is a member of the Church of Christ the King in Brighton, U.K. and supports the “extraordinary manifestations of the Spirit,” which refers to the demonic/fleshly charismatic mysticism such as nonsensical ecstatic tongues, spirit slaying, holy laughter, and shaking.

Townend is holding hands with the “broader church” in all of its facets and heresies and end-time apostasies, and Townend’s objective in writing the “hymn-like” contemporary songs is ecumenism. He is doubtless sincere in this, but he is sincerely and decidedly and dangerously *wrong*.

Townend is a rock & roller, pure and simple. In his blog he said that he doesn’t go home and put on a hymns album, that this is not “where I’m at musically at all.” He simply wants to use the soft CCM to bring together the “broader church.”

When “traditional” churches borrow Townend’s “soft” CCM “hymns,” the contemporary churches are in no danger of being “traditionalized,” but the traditional churches are most definitely in danger of being contemporarized and led into the treacherous waters of modern evangelicalism.

The Old Prophets Were Not Soft Separatists

Focusing on preaching “positive truth,” avoiding plain identification of and reproof of compromise and error, being careless in associations with compromisers, praising “conservative evangelicals,” adapting contemporary worship music -- all of this and more is “soft separatism,” and the prophets show us the heart of God toward it.

The prophets were taught by God to have the future in view; they saw the end of the matter. They were not pragmatists who only cared about what seemed to work to “build something for God.” They were more concerned about toppling idols than avoiding fragmentation. They weren’t positivists who saw only the good. They knew that not all “criticism” is wrong. They didn’t preach against a mere select list of “essential” idols while leaving the rest alone as “non-essentials.” They didn’t put some idolaters out of bounds of reproof.

The old prophets teach us that God requires spiritual leaders to remove all the idols, to reprove all the evil, and if they don't they are greatly compromising the New Testament faith and God is highly displeased.

Every preacher will give account for the same solemn charge that was delivered by the apostle Paul to Timothy:

"As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou MIGHTEST CHARGE SOME THAT THEY TEACH NO OTHER DOCTRINE. ... I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession; That thou KEEP THIS COMMANDMENT WITHOUT SPOT, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Timothy 1:3; 6:13-14).

The Word of God warns that those who associate with heresy can lose their rewards and become partakers of the evil deeds of those who are committed to false teaching (2 John 7-11).

HERESIES AND HIGH PLACES IN THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION AND EVANGELICALISM

The Southern Baptist Convention and evangelical at large today is not a safe place spiritually. It is filled to the brim with ancient and end-times heresies and idols and fables that can be found in the "high places" that have not been torn down.

Indeed, the Convention represents "treacherous waters."

For 50 years men of God have warned that the principle of New Evangelicalism, which is to renounce "separatism" or to be soft on "separatism," would result in spiritual destruction, because the Bible forcefully states, "Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners" (1 Corinthians 15:33), and, "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump" (Galatians 5:9).

In 1969, Dr. Charles Woodbridge, issued this warning:

"The New Evangelicalism advocates **TOLERATION** of error. It is following the downward path of **ACCOMMODATION** to error, **COOPERATION** with error, **CONTAMINATION** by error, and ultimate **CAPITULATION** to error!" (Charles Woodbridge, *The New Evangelicalism*, 1969, pp. 9, 15;

Dr. Woodbridge was a very knowledgeable man. He wrote the previous words as a fundamentalist, but he had spent many years as an evangelical insider. He was a professor at Fuller Theological Seminary in its early days, a founding member of the National Association of Evangelicals, and a personal friend of men such as Harold Ockenga and Carl Henry, but he rejected the New Evangelicalism as unscriptural and spent the rest of his life warning of its dangers.

In that day Woodbridge and others who issued similar warnings were mocked and ignored. They were sidelined as irrelevant and cranky, even dangerous.

But today the truth of Dr. Woodbridge's passionate warning is clear for all to see. Evangelicalism has capitulated to the error from which it has refused to separate.

In 1985, Harold Lindsell, another evangelical insider, issued the following warning: "Evangelicalism today is in a sad state of disarray. ... Evangelicalism's children are in the process of forsaking the faith of their fathers" (*Christian News*, Dec. 2, 1985).

As we will see, not only have many evangelicals lost the faith of their fathers, they have also lost the God of their fathers.

Following are eight examples. Most of these heresies and fables can be found in LifeWay bookstores, which are owned by the Southern Baptist Convention.

- The Smorgasbord of Modern Bible Versions
- Process Salvation
- Ecumenism and Affiliation with the Roman Catholic Church
- Salvation Apart from Faith in Christ
- Downgrade of Biblical Inspiration
- Theistic Evolution
- Catholic Contemplative Mysticism
- False Gods and Goddesses

Churches that do not take a strict and clear separatist stance put their members in danger of being captured by any of these false ways. If an individual starts dabbling with "the broader church," there is no telling where he will end up. We will give some frightful examples of this at the end of the report.

Those who affiliate with "conservative Southern Baptists," letting down the guard of biblical separation and buying into the softer, more tolerant stance, are only an arm's length from any of these dangers.

In the book-length edition of this report, which is available as a free download from the Way of Life web site in pdf, Kindle, and Pub formats, we document 13 more heresies: Masonic Paganism, Cultural Liberalism, Rock & Roll Heathenism, Christian Homosexuality, Downgrade of Hell, Charismatic Heresy, Positive Thinking, Schuller's Self-Esteemism, Dobson's Self-Esteemism, Unconditional Love, Unconditional Forgiveness, New Age, and Denying the Substitutionary Blood Atonement.

THE SMORGASBORD OF MODERN BIBLE VERSIONS

The place we will begin our investigation into heresies and high places in the Southern Baptist Convention is the Bible section of any LifeWay bookstore.

There is a complete capitulation to the heresy of modern textual criticism and its Alexandrian Greek text and a capitulation to the idea that a multiplicity of versions is a blessing.

(And when we warn against the modern versions and promote the King James Bible, we are not fighting for some Ruckmanite principle such as that the King James was given by inspiration or that the King James is advanced revelation over the Greek and Hebrew or that to modernize or change the spelling of a word in the King James is to corrupt God's Word. We are not saying that it is unimportant to learn the biblical languages or that we should throw away all of the lexicons. Some King James defenders do take such a stand, but that is not our position, and we are convinced that Peter Ruckman and Gail Riplinger and their followers have done nearly as much damage to the cause of the King James Bible as the modern versions have done.)

A major problem with the modern version movement is a very practical one: it has weakened the authority of God's Word through the smorgasbord principle. This has happened through an ever-expanding, almost bewildering, multiplicity of versions, and the people are encouraged simply to pick their favorites with no solid standard of biblical authority as an anchor. Consider the following testimony by a former Southern Baptist pastor:

"The problem with the SBC is that they have no absolute biblical authority. Although, while I was still SBC, we claimed to have settled the matter of the inerrancy of Scripture in 1986, we did not settle what Scripture is. The plethora of translations has continued unabated in the two decades since they 'settled the matter of inerrancy.' The abundance of translations provoked me to study the translation issue. I spent two years studying the issue, in an effort to disprove the idea that the King James was any better than the rest. Of course, when I approached the issue with an open mind and heart, the Holy Spirit taught me the truth. That was the 'straw that broke the camels back' for me. I left the convention in October 1996. With each translation saying something different, the casualty has been biblical discernment. The typical SBC church has no less than four different translations in any given service. So, it is impossible for the people to hear 'Thus saith the Lord.' EVERY ISSUE BECOMES DEBATABLE. EVERY CONVICTION BECOMES QUESTIONABLE. Then, spiritual discernment becomes typical of the time of the Judges (i.e., every man doing that which is right in his own eyes). Therefore, it makes sense that they are so willing and ready to accept the abominable heresies of *The Shack*." (Marty Wynn, Lighthouse Baptist Church, Columbus, Georgia, e-mail to D. Cloud, May 21, 2011).

This is a recipe for spiritual deception and an ideal environment for the promotion of heresy.

The smorgasbord principle in Bible versions is a very slippery slope. When the modern version path is first entered from a conservative KJV stance, it is typical for the individual to stay with the more conservative, literal modern translations. But these are very treacherous waters, and they frequently lead to the capitulation of all sense of spiritual discernment and to the acceptance of the strangest, most radical "versions" such as *The Message*. The following readings are typical:

Matthew 5:3

KJV - "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

THE MESSAGE - "You're blessed when you're at the end of your rope. With less of you there is more of God and his rule."

Matthew 5:8

KJV - "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God."

THE MESSAGE - "You're blessed when you get your inside world, your mind and heart, put right. Then you can see God in the outside world."

Matthew 5:14

KJV - "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid."

THE MESSAGE - "Here's another way to put it: You're here to be light, bringing out the God-colors in the world."

You might say, "Who in the world would use and recommend such a corruption?"

The answer is a Who's Who list of evangelicals and Southern Baptists. *The Message* has been recommended by **Billy Graham, Warren Wiersbe, Jack Hayford, J.I. Packer, Michael Card, Leighton Ford, Bill Hybels, Lamar Cooper of Criswell College, Paul House of Southern Baptist Seminary, Bill and Gloria Gaither, Chuck Swindoll, Gary Smalley, Gordon Fee, Gordon MacDonald, Jerry Jenkins, John Maxwell, Joyce Meyer, Max Lucado, Michael W. Smith, the Newsboys, Phil Driscoll, Rebecca St. James, Stuart and Jill Briscoe, Tony Campolo, and Vernon Grounds**, to name a few. **Rick Warren** quotes it frequently, five times in the first chapter of *The Purpose-Driven Life*. **Joni Eareckson Tada** says, "WOW! What a treasure *The Message* is." (This information was gathered from the NAVPress web site.).

How many conservative evangelicals and conservative Southern Baptists have torn down the idol of modern textual criticism and dynamic equivalency and the smorgasbord approach to the Bible Version issue and removed the high places where this heresy has spread?

For the rest of this section, see the book-length edition of this report, which is available as a free download from the Way of Life web site in pdf, Kindle, and Pub formats.

PROCESS SALVATION

Influential author **Robert Webber** argued that salvation "can have a dramatic beginning or can come as a result of a process over time" (*The Divine Embrace*, p. 149).

Dallas Willard writes, "Why is it that we look upon salvation as a moment that began our religious life instead of the daily life we receive from God" (*The Spirit of the Disciplines*).

Tony Campolo writes, “My mother hoped I would have one of those dramatic ‘born-again’ experiences ... but it never worked for me. ... In my case intimacy with Christ was developed gradually over the years” (*Letters to a Young Evangelical*, pp. 25, 26, 30).

Elisabeth Elliot writes, “It does not say that those who receive Christ become instant children of God. It says He gives them the right to become” (*Taking Flight*, p. 12).

There are just a few examples of the heresy of process salvation that can be found in the writings of popular evangelical authors.

In contrast, Jesus described salvation as a “birth” and a “conversion” (John 3:3; Matthew 18:3). The salvations described in the book of Acts were all of the born again/conversion type. Consider the 3,000 on the Day of Pentecost, the Apostle Paul, the Ethiopian eunuch, Lydia, and the Philippian jailer.

ECUMENISM AND AFFILIATION WITH THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

Billy Graham has led the way in ecumenism and affiliation with the Roman Catholic Church since the 1950s. He has turned thousands of converts over to Roman Catholic and modernistic Protestant churches. His policy was stated plainly by the vice-chairman of the organizing committee of a Vancouver, British Columbia crusade, “If Catholics step forward THERE WILL BE NO ATTEMPT TO CONVERT THEM and their names will be given to the Catholic church nearest their homes” (David Cline of Brighthouse United Church, *Vancouver Sun*, Oct. 5, 1984).

In a May 30, 1997, interview, Graham told David Frost: “I’M EQUALLY AT HOME IN AN ANGLICAN OR BAPTIST OR A BRETHREN ASSEMBLY OR A ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH. ... Today we have almost 100 percent Catholic support in this country. That was not true twenty years ago. And the bishops and archbishops and the Pope are our friends” (David Frost, *Billy Graham in Conversation*, pp. 68, 143).

Franklin Graham is walking in his father’s footsteps. He told the *Indianapolis Star* that his father’s ecumenical alliance with the Catholic Church and all other denominations “was one of the smartest things his father ever did” (“Keeping it simple, safe keeps Graham on high,” *The Indianapolis Star*, Thurs., June 3, 1999, p. H2).

Even the most conservative Southern Baptist is a supporter of Billy and Franklin Graham and their heretical ecumenical evangelism. Consider **Al Mohler Jr., President of Southern Baptist Seminary**, who was the chairman of a Graham Crusade in 2001.

Consider the Southern Baptist **Chuck Colson**. In his influential book *The Body*, he said, “The body of Christ, in all its diversity, is created with Baptist feet, Charismatic hands, and Catholic ears--all with their eyes on Jesus.”

Consider **Max Lucado**. In his book *In the Grip of Grace*, he praises God for the Church of Christ (who teach the heresy of baptismal regeneration), Pentecostals, Anglicans, Southern Baptists, Presbyterians, and Roman Catholics.

Consider **Elisabeth Elliot**. She is radically ecumenical in philosophy, speaking at the Roman Catholic Franciscan University in 1989 and at Notre Dame in 1998. At a meeting on Sept. 6, 1997, at the Waukesha Wisconsin Expo Center sponsored by WVCY radio of Milwaukee, she exposed just how radically unscriptural her thinking has become when she answered the following questions:

Question: Can a person be Catholic and Christian in union?

Mrs. Elliot: Yes, we can have unity in diversity; my brother [Thomas Howard] is a Catholic and a Christian.

Question: Then is it acceptable to celebrate the [Catholic] Eucharist?

Mrs. Elliot: Yes. (E-mail from Steve Straub Waukesha, Wisconsin to David Cloud, Sept. 8, 1997).

Consider **Robert Webber**: “[The right] perspective will allow us to see Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant churches as various forms of the one true church...” (*Ancient-Future Faith*, p. 85).

We could give countless more examples of the fact that the most radical ecumenism and a love for Rome are perfectly at home within the Southern Baptist Convention.

It is common within the Convention to hear Mother Teresa exalted as a great Christian, when the truth is that she was committed to a false gospel and served a false christ.

How many conservative evangelicals and conservative Southern Baptists have torn down the idol of Graham-style ecumenism and removed the high places where this heresy has spread?

Rather, they are bridges to ecumenism and Rome.

SALVATION APART FROM FAITH IN CHRIST

The heresy that men can be saved apart from faith in Christ is growing rapidly within the Southern Baptist Convention because has been allowed to remain in the high places.

Billy Graham blazed the trail in this. In an interview with *McCall's* magazine, January 1978, entitled “I Can’t Play God Any More,” Graham said: “I used to believe that pagans in far-off countries were lost—were going to hell—if they did not have the Gospel of Jesus Christ preached to them. I no longer believe that. ... I believe that there are other ways of recognizing the existence of God—through nature, for instance—and plenty of other opportunities, therefore, of saying ‘yes’ to God.” Graham repeated this heresy in his 1993 interview with David Frost and his 1997 interview with Robert Schuller.

C.S. Lewis, whose writings are fervently loved among Southern Baptists and are sold in LifeWay bookstores, claimed that followers of pagan religions can be saved without faith in Jesus Christ: “There are people in other religions who are being led by God’s secret influence to concentrate on those parts of their religion which are in agreement with Christianity, and who thus belong to Christ without knowing it” (*Mere Christianity*, HarperSanFrancisco edition, 2001, p. 64). In the popular *Chronicles of Narnia* series, which has influenced countless children, Lewis taught that those who *sincerely* serve the devil (called Tash) are actually serving Christ (Aslan) and will eventually be accepted by God (*The Last Battle*, chapter 15, “Further Up and Further In”).

Popular author **Josh McDowell** says that he does not know whether “those who have never heard about Jesus will be automatically damned” (*5 Minutes with Josh*, April 1985). He believes that the Scriptures imply that “someone who has never heard of Jesus can be saved.” He says, “We do believe that every person will have an opportunity to repent and that God will not exclude anyone because he happened to be born ‘at the wrong place and time.’”

Max Lucado preaches the same heresy. In the book *Max on Life* the following question is asked: “What about the people who have never heard of God? Will God punish them?” Lucado replies: “No, He will not. Heaven’s population includes throngs of people who learned the name of their Savior when they awoke in their eternal home” (p. 222).

Dallas Willard says, “It is possible for someone who does not know Jesus to be saved” (*Cutting Edge* magazine, Winter 2000).

Tony Campolo says: “I am not convinced that Jesus only lives in Christians” (*The Charlie Rose Show*, cited from *Calvary Contender*, October 1, 1999).

Popular author **Brennan Manning**, in his books *The Signature of Jesus* and *Gentle Revolutionaries*, describes a dream he had about judgment day in which he saw Adolf Hitler and Hugh Hefner (founder of *Playboy* magazine) and others going before God to be judged, but God just takes them by the hand and walks them home.

The Shack god says, “Those who love me come from every system that exists ... Buddhists ... Mormons ... Muslims ... I have no desire to make them Christian” (p. 182).

How many conservative evangelicals and conservative Southern Baptists have reproved all of these popular authors and torn down the idol of the inclusivism and removed the high places where this heresy has spread?

DOWNGRADE OF BIBLICAL INSPIRATION

The denial of the infallible inspiration of Scripture, which is a vile heresy that blatantly denies the teaching of Christ and the apostles (e.g., Matthew 5:18; John 10:35; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:19-21), is widespread within the Southern Baptist Convention in spite of the fact that it is contrary to the denomination's own statement of faith and it has been somewhat weeded out of the seminaries through the "conservative renaissance."

The heresy of partial inspiration can be found in the writings of the modern textual critics that are promoted even in the most conservative of seminaries. Two prominent examples are Kurt Aland and Bruce Metzger. Aland denied "the idea of verbal inspiration" and claimed that even the canon of Scripture is not a settled issue (*The Problem of the New Testament Canon*, pp. 30-33). Metzger said the Pentateuch is "a matrix of myth, legend, and history," Noah's flood was local, Job is an ancient folktale, Isaiah was written by three men, and Jonah is a "popular legend" (notes in the *New Oxford Annotated Bible RSV*, 1973).

The heresy of partial inspiration is held by many other authors whose writings are distributed by LifeWay.

C.S. Lewis denied that the Bible is infallibly inspired and called Jonah and Job fables ("Modern Theology and Biblical Criticism," *Christian Reflections*, edited by Walter Hooper, Eerdmans).

Dallas Willard says, "Jesus and his words have never belonged to the categories of dogma or law, and to read them as if they did is simply to miss the point" (*The Divine Conspiracy*, p. xiii).

Rob Bell, in *Velvet Elvis*, says the New Testament epistles "aren't first and foremost timeless truths" (p. 62) and says the apostles didn't "claim to have the absolute word from God" (p. 57).

Brennan Manning says: "I develop a nasty rash around people who speak as if mere scrutiny of [the Bible's] pages will reveal precisely how God thinks and precisely what God wants" (*The Signature of Jesus*).

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who widely exalted within the Southern Baptist Convention and whose books and biographies are sold by LifeWay, denied the verbal-plenary inspiration of Scripture, believing that the Bible was only a "witness" to the Word of God and becomes the Word of God only when it "speaks" to an individual; otherwise, it was simply the word of man/men (*Testimony to Freedom*, pp. 9, 104; *Sanctorum Communio*, p. 161).

Tony Campolo praises the modernist Kierkegaard for "rejecting the bibliolatry of those fundamentalists who would make the Scriptures the ultimate authority for faith" (*Partly Right*, p. 99).

How many conservative evangelicals and conservative Southern Baptists have reproved these men and torn down the idol of partial inspiration EVERYWHERE it has reared its ugly head and completely removed the high places where this heresy has spread?

THEISTIC EVOLUTION

The rank heresy of Theistic Evolution has permeated evangelicalism. Ken Ham surveyed 200 Christian schools, including the prominent evangelical ones, and found that only 75% do not teach that evolution is false. Only 50% believe in a six-day creation. The survey results were published in Ham's 2011 book *Already Compromised*.

At **Wheaton College**, **John Walton**, professor of Old Testament, teaches heresy in his book *The Lost World of Genesis One*. He believes that Adam is "archetypal" representative of mankind in general and the Garden of Eden is "archetypal" of "a place where God dwells." He believes life on earth evolved over millions of years.

At **Calvin College**, **Davis Young**, emeritus professor of geology, believes "the earth has undergone a long and complex history spanning 4.5 billion years" (*Portraits of Creation*, p. 6).

Howard Van Till, emeritus professor of physics at Calvin, "the beginning of the universe took place about fifteen billion years ago" (*Portraits of Creation*, p. 105).

Daniel Harlow, associate professor of religion at **Calvin College**, says "Recent research in molecular biology, primatology, sociobiology and phylogenetics indicates that the species *Homo sapiens* cannot be traced back to a single pair of individuals, and that the earliest human beings did not come on the scene in anything like paradisaical physical or moral conditions. It is therefore difficult to read Genesis 1-3 as a factual account of human origins" ("After Adam: Reading Genesis in an Age of Evolutionary Science," *Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith*, Sept. 2010, p. 179).

William Dembski is a Southern Baptist who has taught at Baylor University and Southern Baptist Seminary and since 2006, at **Southwestern Baptist Seminary**. He believes that Adam and Eve were "human-like beings from outside the Garden" and that God transformed "their consciousness so that they" became "rational moral agents"; after this they "experienced an amnesia of their former animal life" (Dembski, *The End of Christianity*, 2009, pp. 154, 155). He says, "Dating methods, in my view, provide strong evidence for rejecting this face-value chronological reading of Genesis 4-11" ("Christian Theodicy in Light of Genesis and Modern Science," p. 49).

Bruce Waltke, **Knox Theological Seminary**, says "The best harmonious synthesis of the special revelation of the Bible ... and of science is the theory of theistic evolution" (*An Old Testament Theology*, 2007, pp. 202-203).

Darrell Falk of **Point Loma Nazarene University** is president of BioLogos Foundation and thus agrees with this organization's statement as follows: "Perhaps God used the evolutionary process to equip humankind with language, free will and culture, and then revealed God's will to

individuals or a community so that they might then enter into meaningful relationship with God” (<http://biologos.org>, cited from *Already Compromised*, p. 180).

Karl Giberson of **Eastern Nazarene College** says, “We believe in evolution --- and God. ... The ‘science’ undergirding this ‘young earth creationism’ comes from a narrow, literalistic and relatively recent interpretation of Genesis” (*USA Today*, Op-Ed, Aug. 10, 2009).

William Lane Craig, **Talbot School of Theology**, says that the earth is “around 13.7 billion years” and a young earth position “is not plausible” and that he is “going with the flow of what contemporary cosmology and astrophysics supports” (Interview by Michael Coren on the *Michael Coren Show*, Feb. 6, 2009, Canadian TV).

Nancy Murphy Professor of Philosophy at **Fuller Theological Seminary**, says, “Theology does sometimes need to be revised in light of science. For example, cosmology, astronomy, geology and evolutionary biology have together called for rejecting the ancient idea of a Golden Age following by a historic fall that changed the processes of nature” (“Nature’s God: An Interview with Nancy Murphy,” *The Christian Century*, Dec. 27, 2005).

Alister McGrath of **Regent College** in British Columbia commends Nancy Murphy’s approach to this issue. He wants to find ways to “allow evangelicals to affirm naturalist scientific explanations without implying the non-existence of God” (“Science and Faith at Odds?” <http://www.qideas.org/essays/science-and-faith-at-odds.aspx?page=5>, accessed May 29, 2011).

Theistic evolutionists believe that it is possible to reconcile the Bible with evolution, but in reality this is nonsense. The first 11 chapters of Genesis are clearly presented as history rather than poetry or allegory. Further, Genesis 1-11 is cited repeatedly as history by Jesus and the Apostles. In Luke 17:26-32, for example, Jesus mentions Noah, the Ark, the Flood, Lot, the destruction of Sodom by fire, and Lot’s wife. Elsewhere Jesus mentions the Creation (Mk. 13:19), Adam and Eve (Mat. 19:4-6; Mk. 10:6-7), Cain and Abel (Mat. 23:35; Lk. 11:50-51). In Matthew 19:4-5, Christ mentions both “accounts” of creation in Genesis 1 and 2 and treats them as history. It is impossible to honor Jesus Christ as Lord and disregard His teaching. Many theistic evolutionists, such as Francis Collins, head of the Human Genome Project, claim to be “evangelical” and to honor Jesus as Lord and Saviour, but this is not consistent with the rejection of His teaching about Genesis and human origins.

Genesis 1-3 forms the historical foundation of the gospel of Jesus Christ. If Adam was not a real man and there was no literal Fall, the gospel becomes some sort of empty metaphysical thing. Jesus’ genealogy is traced from Adam (Luke 3:23-38), and there is no room here for millions of years of time. Adam is compared to Christ (Romans 5:12-19; 1 Cor. 15:45). It is obvious that the apostle Paul considered Adam an historical figure and Genesis as literal history.

Theistic evolution is not a small heresy.

CATHOLIC CONTEMPLATIVE MYSTICISM

The contemplative movement has spread within evangelicalism in general and the Southern Baptist Convention in particular like wildfire over the past decade. It has its own evangelical gurus, such as Richard Foster, but its methods and principles come from Roman Catholic monasticism, with its roots deeply planted in pagan philosophy.

Some of the popular Catholic mystics you will find in many evangelical bookstores are Julian of Norwich, Teresa of Avila, John of the Cross, Francis of Assisi, Ignatius of Loyola (co-founder of the Jesuits who were at the forefront of the violent papal counter-reformation), Thomas Aquinas, Bernard of Clairvaux, Madame Guyon, Henri Nouwen, Brother Lawrence, Thomas Ryan, John Main, John Michael Talbot, Thomas Keating, Basil Pennington, Thomas Keating, and Thomas Merton.

Regardless of any biblical-sounding statements that can be pulled from the writings of these people, the fact remains that they are committed to a false sacramental gospel or faith plus works, which is cursed of God in Galatians 1, and most of them adored Mary as much as or more than Christ, which is unadulterated idolatry. In fact, they were absolutely laden down with heresies.

The mystical “spirituality” that is so popular in evangelical and charismatic circles today is a yearning for an experiential relationship with God that downplays the role of faith and Scripture (at least in practice) and that exalts “transcendental” experiences. Biblical prayer is talking with God; contemplative prayer is silent meditation “beyond thought” and “centering” and other such things. Biblical Bible study is analyzing and meditating upon the literal truth of the Scripture; contemplative spirituality focuses on a “deeper meaning”; it is more allegorical and “transcendental” than literal.

Popular contemplative practices include Centering Prayer which involves emptying the mind of conscious thoughts about God with the objective of entering into a non-verbal experiential union with God in the center of one’s being. Chanting is often used to drive away thoughts.

Visualization Prayer is trying to imagine oneself in a Biblical scene, such as talking to baby Jesus in the manger.

The Jesus Prayer consists of repeating the phrase “Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy upon me.”

The most influential promoter of contemplative mysticism is Richard Foster, author of *Celebration of Discipline*. He promotes the aforementioned Catholic mystics. He claims that through meditation one can “center” deep within oneself and “actually encounter the living Christ” and “be addressed by his voice” (*Celebration of Discipline*, p. 26). He says that the contemplative practitioner can enter “into a deep inner communion with the Father where you look at Him and He looks at you” (p. 27). In the first edition of his book, Foster promoted a

visualization practice where the individual leaves his body and goes “deep into outer space” into the very “presence of the eternal Creator” and there listens carefully and gets instruction directly from God (*Celebration of Discipline*, 1978 edition, pp. 27-28).

Contemplative mysticism is spreading everywhere in the Southern Baptist Convention and within evangelicalism in general.

It is promoted in “spirituality” courses at **Southern Baptist schools**. On a visit to Golden Gate Theological Seminary in February 2000, I noticed that most of the required reading for the course on “Classics of Church Devotion” are books by Roman Catholic mystics, including Ignatius of Loyola, Thomas Merton, Bernard of Clairvaux, and Teresa of Avila.

Contemplative mysticism is promoted by influential Southern Baptist pastors, such as **Rick Warren** of Saddleback Church.

Contemplative mysticism is promoted by **state associations** affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention, including the Grand Valley Baptist Association of Grand Junction, Colorado, and the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, as documented by Lighthouse Trails ministry.

Evangelical authors who promote contemplative mysticism include Bill Hybels of Willow Creek, Chuck Swindoll, David Jeremiah, Beth Moore, Mark Driscoll, Max Lucado, Philip Yancey, Eugene Peterson, Lee Strobel and his son Kyle.

How many conservative evangelicals and conservative Southern Baptists have torn down the idol of contemplative mysticism and removed the high places where this heresy has spread?

FALSE GODS AND GODDESSES

Not only is the Southern Baptist Convention and evangelicalism at large filled with heresies and fables, there is a rapid move toward acceptance of false gods and even goddess worship.

Consider *The Shack*.

William Paul Young’s novel *The Shack* has resonated widely among Southern Baptists, even though it presents God as a male/female non-judgmental being.

Though fictional, the book’s objective is the redefinition of God. It is about a man who becomes bitter at God after his daughter is murdered and has a life-changing experience in the very shack where the murder occurred; but the God he encounters is most definitely *not* the God of the Bible. Young’s depicts God the Father as a black woman who loves rock & roll, and well as a man with gray hair and a pony tail. Young’s male/female god/goddess is the god of the emerging church. He is cool, loves rock & roll, is non-judgmental, does not exercise wrath toward sin, does not send unbelievers to an eternal fiery hell, does not require repentance and the new birth,

and puts no obligations on people. (For documentation see “The Shack’s Cool God” at the Way of Life web site, www.wayoflife.org.)

I don’t know if this is still the case, but I do know that in the past LifeWay bookstores sold *The Shack* with only a mild, vague, meaningless warning.

The message and god/goddess of *The Shack* has resonated far and wide within evangelicalism. William Paul Young was promoted at the National Pastors Conference in San Diego in 2009, which was sponsored by Zondervan and InterVarsity Fellowship. A large percentage of the preachers in attendance had read the book, and its author was enthusiastically received. He was interviewed in a general session by Andy Crouch of *Christianity Today*. There was not a hint of concern about his theology or goddess worship.

Many Southern Baptists love *The Shack*, which is irrefutable evidence of the deep spiritual apostasy that exists in that Convention. I received the following frightful testimony from a pastor who came out of the Convention in 1996:

“Concerning the question about ‘*The Shack*,’ I have been shocked at the willingness of many of my former SBC friends and acquaintances to receive it as a ‘great’ book. As you know, and have taught, the book presents a picture of ‘God’ that is not biblical. The ready acceptance of this book by the vast majority of those I know, is indicative of a serious lack of discernment. It seems that spiritual discernment is a rapidly dissipating quality today. I have questioned several folk on their acceptance of ‘*The Shack*’ and its false teaching. Their response has been, ‘But it teaches a good truth about how God loves us.’ This is characteristic of the modern church-growth movement that focuses solely on the ‘love of God,’ and relegates His holiness, righteousness and judgments to the ‘unimportant’” (Marty Wynn, Lighthouse Baptist Church, Columbus, Georgia, e-mail to D. Cloud, May 21, 2011).

William Paul Young and his novel is not the only example of the promotion of false gods within the SBC and evangelicalism today. In fact, many of the practitioners of contemplative spirituality are led to a pagan concept of God.

Norman Vincent Peale described God as a New Age god of energy: “Who is God? ... God is energy. As you breathe God in, as you visualize His energy, you will be reenergized” (*You Can If You Think You Can*).

In his 2011 book *Love Wins*, **Rob Bell** says that the traditional view of hell presents a “cheap view of God” (Kindle location 47-60, 2154-2180). He says there is something wrong with this God and calls Him “terrifying and traumatizing and unbearable” (location 1273-1287, 2098-2113). He even says that if an earthly father acted like the God who sends people to hell “we could contact child protection services immediately” (location 2085-2098). Bell’s god is more akin to New Age panentheism than the God of the Bible. He describes God as “a force, an energy, a being calling out to us in many languages, using a variety of methods and events” (*Love Wins*, location 1710-1724). Bell also worships a false christ. His Jesus is “supracultural ... present within all cultures ... refuses to be co-opted or owned by any one

culture ... He doesn't even state that those coming to the Father through him will even know that they are coming exclusively through him ... there is only one mountain, but many paths. ... People come to Jesus in all sorts of ways ... Sometimes people use his name; other times they don't" (*Love Wins*, location 1827-1840, 1865-1878, 1918-1933).

The last I checked, LifeWay wasn't selling Bell's book *Love Wins*, but they have long distributed his other books such as *Velvet Elvis* and his *Nooma* video series.

John Michael Talbot says God is "the Ultimate Reality" who is known by "pure spiritual intuition ... beyond all thought" ("The Many Paths of Religion and the One God of Faith," Part 2).

Brennan Manning has exchanged the holy God of Scripture for an idol: "[T]he god whose moods alternate between graciousness and fierce anger ... the god who exacts the last drop of blood from his Son so that his just anger, evoked by sin, may be appeased, is not the God revealed by and in Jesus Christ. And if he is not the God of Jesus, he does not exist" (Brennan Manning, *Above All*, p. 58-59; the foreword to this book is written by CCM artist Michael W. Smith).

Thomas Merton, who is acclaimed widely within evangelicalism, said that to unite with the inner ground of reality "is the will of God, of Krishna, of Providence, of Tao" (*Asian Journal of Thomas Merton*). Merton worshipped Buddhist idols in Sri Lanka.

Sue Monk Kidd took the path of contemplative mysticism from a Southern Baptist church all the way to goddess worship. She writes, "Over the altar in my study I hung a lovely mirror sculpted in the shape of a crescent moon. It reminded me to honor the Divine Feminine presence in myself" (*The Dance of the Dissident Daughter*).

Alan "Bede" Griffiths was a contemplative Catholic priest who adopted Hinduism. He wrote, "I saw God in the earth, in trees, in mountains. It led me to the conviction that there is no absolute good or evil in this world" (1991, <http://www.bede.griffiths.com/bio.htm>).

Many contemplative practitioners have come to believe in the pagan panentheism concept, that God is in everything.

Ken Blanchard is a board member of the Hoffman Institute which holds to the Hindu principle that the universe is one and man is God. "I am you and you are me. We are all parts of the whole. ... When you are open to life, you start noticing the divine in everything" (Tim Laurence, *The Hoffman Process*, pp. 206, 209).

Anthony De Mello, Catholic contemplative, says: "Think of the air as of an immense ocean that surrounds you ... an ocean heavily colored with God's presence and God's being. ... While you draw the air into your lungs you are drawing God in" (*Sadhana: A Way to God*, p. 36).

John of the Cross said, “My beloved [God] is the high mountains, and the lovely valley forests, unexplored islands, rushing rivers” (Timothy Freke, *The Spiritual Canticle: The Wisdom of the Christian Mystics*, p. 60).

Julian of Norwich said, “I saw that God is in all things” (quoted by Matthew Fox, *The Coming of the Cosmic Christ*, 1988, p. 123), and, “And I saw no difference between God and our Substance: but as it were all God” (“Julian of Norwich,” Lighthouse Trails Research).

Meister Eckhart said: “Therefore God is free of all things and therefore he is all things.”

Henri Nouwen said: “It is in the heart of God that we can come to the full realization of THE UNITY OF ALL THAT IS” (*Bread for the Journey*, 1997, Jan. 15 and Nov. 16).

Willigis Jager, Catholic contemplative, says, “The physical world, human beings, and everything that is are all forms of the Ultimate Reality, all expressions of God, all ‘one with the Father’” (*Contemplation: A Christian Path*, p. 93).

Wayne Teasdale, Catholic contemplative, said, “You are God; I am God; they are God; it is God” (“The Mystic Heart: The Supreme Identity,” <http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=-7652038071112490301&q=ken+Wilber>).

In the book-length edition of this report, which is available as a free download from the Way of Life web site in pdf, Kindle, and Pub formats, we document 13 more heresies: Masonic Paganism, Cultural Liberalism, Rock & Roll Heathenism, Christian Homosexuality, Downgrade of Hell, Charismatic Heresy, Positive Thinking, Schuller’s Self-Esteemism, Dobson’s Self-Esteemism, Unconditional Love, Unconditional Forgiveness, New Age, and Denying the Substitutionary Blood Atonement.

THE PATH OF PROTECTION: FULL-ORBED BIBLICAL SEPARATION

There are indeed treacherous waters within the Southern Baptist Convention and evangelicalism at large. We have documented eight ancient and end-times heresies that can be found in these waters, and there are many others.

How can a Bible-believing church protect its people from these treacherous waters?

The only real protection is to obey the biblical practice of separation, which is summarized in Romans 16:17:

“Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.”

We see, first, the basis or standard of separation and that is the doctrine we have learned from the apostles. This is the New Testament faith for which we are to earnestly contend (Jude 3).

The next question is which part of the faith are we to contend for and separate over? The answer is all of it, because Paul does not say to mark and avoid those who cause divisions and offences contrary to *some of* the doctrine which we have learned.

It is true that this principle is the path of “fragmentation,” and the more widely apostasy spreads the more fragmentation it creates, but it is also true that this is what the Bible plainly teaches and it is the path of spiritual protection.

Those who hold the “in essentials unity; in non-essentials liberty” doctrine cannot show us where this principle was taught by Christ or Paul or any of the apostles. They cannot show from the clear teaching of Scripture how to identify a “non-essential” doctrine, nor can they show how a list of “non-essentials” can keep from growing larger with each generation as it has everywhere this principle has been accepted. At first only things like “music” or “dress” or “Bible versions” are considered “non-essential,” but after awhile the list includes things like a woman’s call to preach and the interpretation of prophecy and the definition of God’s sovereignty in election and ecumenical evangelism and definitions of the atonement -- and the list just keeps growing.

The biblical way is to reject the “essentials/non-essentials” philosophy and to respect the whole counsel of the New Testament faith.

This does not mean that we consider all doctrine of equal importance. There are damnable heresies, which only the unregenerate hold, and lesser heresies, which even born again believers hold. But every clearly-taught doctrine of the New Testament faith should be honored and none despised. And we should be willing to defend whatever doctrine happens to be under attack at any given time.

That is the basis of separation.

What, then, is the method of separation? There are two essential parts of biblical separatism. The first is marking and warning, and the second is avoiding.

“... mark them ... and avoid them.”

Both are necessary. Marking is just as important as avoiding.

To MARK someone who is committed to error means to identify him. How do we do this? We do it by plain exposure, reproof and warning. If a man is prominent in teaching a certain error, he

should be marked and reproved so that God's people can know exactly who to avoid. This is why I use the names of men like Jack Hyles and Curtis Hutson when warning about Quick Prayerism. They were at the forefront of promoting that great error and redefining biblical repentance, and they were in a position to influence multitudes. I use names such as Billy and Franklin Graham and Luis Palau to illustrate the heresy of ecumenical evangelism. I use the names of Mark Driscoll and Ed Stetzer in warning of the heresy of "cultural liberalism," and the names of Rick Warren and Bill Hybels in warning about the church growth movement.

To mark means to warn plainly about many of the popular authors who are distributed through evangelical bookstores such as LifeWay. This report ("The Path from Independent Baptist to The Shack, Rome, and Beyond"), which we are publishing freely in book form at the Way of Life site, provides a lot of information like this. (Make sure to get the full-length book from the web site, as this abbreviated edition which we are publishing in *O Timothy* and via the Fundamental Baptist Information Service e-mail list doesn't contain the full 20 heresies and fables that populate the treacherous waters.)

It means to warn plainly about most of the syndicated Christian radio personalities, (See "Dangers on Christian Radio" at the Way of Life web site.)

It means to have Bible conferences that provide solid education and warning. I thank the Lord that there are still Independent Baptist churches that host such conferences, and I preach in about 10 of these annually.

It means to provide sound literature that can educate and warn the people about the spiritual dangers that they must face today. I urge Bible-believing churches to set up their own bookstores to provide such literature, because typically it will not be found in the commercial Christian bookstores. (The report "Recommended Materials for Church Bookstores" offers suggestions along this line.)

To look upon this type of thing as mere "negativity" is not wise. This is the way of spiritual protection in the midst of end-times apostasy. There is no shortcut. Thinking positively will not make the treacherous waters any safer!

Without such plain warning and education, the Lord's people are left to drift without a solid anchor and they can easily drift into treacherous waters.

If a church doesn't want to make "a major issue" of this type of thing and considers it perhaps distasteful or or distracting from "more important things," or even wrong, and wants to keep the message more on a positive keel, and therefore doesn't plainly identify and reprove popular heresies and fables and doesn't name the names of popular but erring Christian leaders, it *will gradually be leavened by error*.

But marking and reproof is not enough. We must also **AVOID**. That is a very simple and powerfully descriptive term.

To avoid those who are committed to error means to stay away from their churches, the Bible studies, their writings, their conferences, their schools, their radio and television ministries, and their Internet blogs.

It doesn't mean to hate them; it means to disassociate from them so as not to be affected by the leaven of their error. It means to disassociate from them so as to be the right example to your people.

This practice is very dramatic and "radical" and "extreme" in our day, but it is exactly what the Bible requires and it is the way of spiritual protection.

This is the way to cut off the leaven of compromise and heresy so that it does not spread through a church.

FRIGHTFUL EXAMPLES OF THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN SHIPWRECKED IN THE TREACHEROUS WATERS OF EVANGELICALISM

The following are two examples. We give two more examples in the full-length book edition of **THE PATH FROM INDEPENDENT BAPTIST TO THE SHACK, ROME, AND BEYOND**, which is available as a free eBook from Way of Life Literature.

Consider the case of **SUE MONK KIDD**.

Her story is loud warning of the treacherous waters that exist in the Southern Baptist Convention today.

Kidd is a very popular writer. Her first two novels, *The Secret Life of Bees* (2002) and *The Mermaid Chair* (2005), have sold more than 6 million copies.

She was raised in a Southern Baptist congregation in southwest Georgia. Her grandfather and father were Baptist deacons. Her grandmother gave devotionals at the Women's Missionary Union, and her mother was a Sunday School teacher. Her husband was a minister who taught religion and a chaplain at a Baptist college. She was very involved in church, teaching Sunday School and attending services Sunday morning and evening and Wednesday. She was even inducted into a group of women called the Gracious Ladies, the criterion for which was that "one needed to portray certain ideals of womanhood, which included being gracious and giving of oneself unselfishly."

When Kidd was 30, a Sunday School co-worker gave her a book by Thomas Merton. Feeling “spiritually empty” she decided to read the book.

She should have known better and should have been warned by her brethren, but the New Evangelical philosophy has created an atmosphere in which the reading of a Catholic monk’s book by a Southern Baptist Sunday School teacher is acceptable in a large number of churches.

Thomas Merton was deeply affected by Mary veneration, Buddhism and Hinduism, so it is not surprising that his writings would create an appetite that could lead to Kidd all the way to goddess worship. In *The New Seeds of Contemplation*, Merton made the following frightening statement that shows the great danger of Catholic mysticism:

“In the end the contemplative suffers the anguish of realizing that HE NO LONGER KNOWS WHAT GOD IS. He may or may not mercifully realize that, after all, this is a great gain, because ‘God is not a what,’ not a ‘thing.’ This is precisely one of the essential characteristics of contemplative experience. It sees that there is no ‘what’ that can be called God” (p. 13).

What Catholic mysticism does is reject the Bible as the sole and sufficient and perfect revelation of God and tries to delve beyond the Bible, even beyond conscious thought, to find God through mystical “intuition” or “love.” It says that God cannot be known perfectly by doctrine and cannot be described in words. He must be *experienced* through mysticism.

And this opens the practitioner to demonic delusion.

Kidd began to practice Catholic forms of contemplative spirituality, read the “church fathers,” and visit Catholic retreat centers and monasteries. She accepted the mass and other sacramental practices. There is an occultic power in the mass that has influenced many who have approached it in a non-critical manner.

She learned dream analysis and believed that her dreams are revelations. One recurring dream featured an old woman. Kidd concluded that this is “the Feminine Self or the voice of the feminine soul” and she was encouraged in her feminist studies by these visitations.

She determined to stop testing things and follow her heart (*The Dance of the Dissident Daughter*, p. 140), rejecting the Bible’s admonition to “prove all things” (1 Thessalonians 5:21). In church one day the pastor proclaimed that the Bible is the sole authority for truth, and she describes the frightful thing that happened in her heart at that moment:

“I remember a feeling rising up from a place about two inches below my navel. ... It was the purest inner knowing I had experienced, and it was shouting in me no, no, no! The ultimate authority of my life is not the Bible; it is not confined between the covers of a book. It is not something written by men and frozen in time. It is not from a source outside myself. My ultimate authority is the divine voice in my own soul. Period. ... That day sitting in church, I believed the voice in my belly. ... The voice in my belly was the voice of the wise old woman. It was my female soul talking. And it had challenged the assumption that the Baptist Church would get me where I needed to go” (*The Dance of the Dissident Daughter*, pp. 76, 77, 78).

Kidd's "pure form of knowing" was a demonic lie.

She traveled with a group of women to Crete where they met in a cave and sang prayers to "the Goddess Skoteini, Goddess of the Dark." She came to the place where she believed that she is a goddess. "To embrace Goddess is simply to discover the Divine in yourself as powerfully and vividly feminine" (p. 141).

She built an altar in her study and populated it with statues of goddesses, an image of Jesus, a Black Madonna -- and a mirror to reflect her own image so she could "honor the Divine Feminine presence in myself, the wisdom in my own soul" (*The Dance of the Dissident Daughter*, p. 181).

Kidd's daughter, too, has accepted goddess worship through her mother's influence.

In spite of her complete apostasy, Sue Monk Kidd is quoted by evangelicals such as David Jeremiah (*Life Wide Open*), Beth Moore (*When Godly People Do Ungodly Things*), and Richard Foster (*Prayer: Finding the Heart's True Home*). Kidd's endorsement is printed on the back of Dallas Willard's book *The Spirit of the Disciplines*. She wrote the foreword to the 2006 edition of Henri Nouwen's *With Open Hands* and the introduction to Thomas Merton's *New Seeds of Contemplation*.

Consider **ROBERT WEBBER** (d. 2007).

Webber grew up a fundamental Baptist, but by rejecting biblical separation he entered the treacherous waters of modern evangelicalism and became shipwreck.

Step by misguided step he was led away from a solid biblical faith into the broader Christian world with all of its heresies and fables.

Webber's father, who was born in 1900, was involved in the fundamentalist-modernist controversy and was a separatist. He left the liberal American Baptist Convention and joined the Conservative Baptists. Webber's parents were missionaries in Africa for the first seven years of his life. The family moved back to the States when one of the children became seriously ill, and the father pastored Montgomeryville Baptist Church, located about 25 miles west of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. After high school Webber attended Bob Jones University.

One thing that is missing in the autobiographical account of his youth is a biblical testimony of salvation. Webber admitted that he didn't have a dramatic conversion experience, and he eventually came to see salvation as a sacramental process that begins at baptism.

While at Bob Jones University, he rejected the doctrine of separation. This was the dramatic event that launched him into the broad and treacherous waters of modern evangelicalism. He

describes how that at BJU he heard the statement that “Billy Graham is the greatest tool of the devil in the twentieth century” (*Evangelicals on the Canterbury Trail*, p. 70). Webber rejected this and mischaracterized separation from Billy Graham as “second degree separation.”

Leaving Bob Jones, Webber launched his boat directly into midst of the broad and treacherous waters.

There he encountered the “church fathers,” and this was a major step in his journey toward the adoption of ancient and end-times heresies. In reality, most of the so-called church fathers of the early centuries were tainted with heresies such as sacramentalism, sanctification through asceticism, infant baptism, sacerdotalism (priestcraft), hierarchicalism, inquisitionism, and Mariolatry. They represent a gradual falling away from the apostolic faith and a preparation for the formation of the Roman Catholic Church. (See the article “Who Are the Church Fathers” at the Way of Life web site.)

Another turning point in Webber’s life occurred in 1965 when he attended an ecumenical prayer community, invited by one of his seminary professors. Benedictine monks, laden down with ancient heresies, formed half of the group. Instead of obeying Romans 16:17 and 1 Corinthians 15:33 and many other Scriptures, Webber agreed to attend and he was dramatically impacted.

By 1972, Webber was preaching a sermon at Wheaton College entitled “The Tragedy of the Reformation.”

Webber developed a love for the Catholic mass and a craving for sacramentalism. He says: “I felt a need for visible and tangible symbols that I could touch, feel, and experience with my senses. This need is met in the reality of Christ presented to me through the sacraments” (*Evangelicals on the Canterbury Trail*, p. 15).

Instead of being satisfied with faith in God’s Word, Webber wanted signs and symbols. He wanted a physical experience, which the error that is at the heart of the contemporary worship movement. The Bible says, “*For we walk by faith, not by sight*” (2 Corinthians 5:7). Faith is the “*evidence of things not seen*” (Hebrews 11:1), and comes by God’s Word by through experiences and sight (Romans 10:17).

Another thing that Webber encountered in the treacherous waters of modern evangelicalism was contemplative mysticism, and this proved to be a great change agent in his life. He recommended resting the chin on the chest and gazing at the area of the heart and repeating the Jesus Prayer (“Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner”) “again and again.” He says, “I feel the presence of Christ through this prayer” (*Evangelicals on the Canterbury Trail*, p. 83). Mysticism is an attempt to experience God, and it is never satisfied with a faith walk based on God’s Word. Christ forbade repetitious prayers (Matthew 6:7-8). When we go beyond the Bible and adopt practices that are contrary to Scripture, the devil is always ready to meet us in his guise as an angel of light (2 Corinthians 11:14).

In *Ancient-Future Faith* (1999), Webber recommended the contemplative writings of the Catholic mystics, including Bernard of Clairvaux, Meister Eckhart, Teresa of Avila, John of the Cross, Thomas Aquinas, and the Catholic-Buddhist Thomas Merton.

By rejecting Biblical separation Robert Webber's boat was set adrift in the treacherous waters of modern evangelicalism and he was spiritually shipwrecked.

CONCLUSION

These frightful testimonies could be multiplied almost endlessly. Countless people have become shipwrecked in the treacherous waters of the Southern Baptist Convention and the "broader evangelical church."

Those who refuse to draw strict lines and raise up high walls against the Convention and who are soft in reproving and warning and careless in associations are forming bridges to these treacherous waters and will answer to God for those souls who cross the bridges and become shipwrecked.

God forbids His people to associate with heretical and pagan things such as meditation practices and labyrinths and monks and monasteries and Mary worship and the Mass. To fail to tear down the idols and high places is an exceedingly serious matter.

"Thus saith the LORD, Learn not the way of the heathen..." (Jeremiah 10:2).

"Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them" (Romans 16:17).

"Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners" (1 Corinthians 15:33).

"And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you" (2 Cor. 6:15-17).

"Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ" (Colossians 2:8).

"Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away" (2 Timothy 3:5).

"For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables" (2 Timothy 3:3-4).

I wish the things described in this report were only a Southern Baptist problem. I wish the heresies and fables and high places were not an Independent Baptist problem, but an ever-

increasing number of bridges are being built between Independent Baptists and the Convention and the influence of the SBC's heresies and high places is bleeding over on many fronts.

This is very sad to me because I was glad to find a haven from the SBC's treacherous waters 38 years ago. I grew up in the Convention and made a typically empty profession of faith as a kid (I'm probably still on the membership rolls at that church), but when I was born again at age 23, I looked for a church that took the Bible more seriously, and I found one in a storefront Independent Baptist church in central Florida that was only a year or two old.

They were separatists! They believed in modest dressing and hated rock & roll and exposed the liberalism and compromise of the SBC and even criticized the Today's English Version that the SBC was distributing in those days. They were "radical extremists." And I loved it. They were also gracious, compassionate Christian people who loved me and helped me even though I was still a "long hair" and was really messed up by the druggie lifestyle I had lived.

I turned my back on the deeply compromised Southern Baptist Convention and its theological liberalism and ecumenical Billy Graham evangelism and rock & roll youth groups and unqualified deacons and Smorgasbord Bible philosophy and Freemason pastors and women teachers of mixed adult SS classes and refusal to practice church discipline.....

Some of my Southern Baptist relatives thought I had fallen in with a cult, but to hold the Bible as one's sole authority for faith and practice and to have a zeal to "hate every false way" is not a cultic principle (Psalm 119:128).

Let's stay in the Book and stay out of the treacherous waters!

This is an abbreviated edition of a book-length report that is available as a free download from the Way of Life web site in pdf, Kindle, and Pub formats. In the book we give much more extensive documentation and information.

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